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2. HAITI: MILITARY AND POLITICAL MANEUVERING ON ACCORD

HAITIAN ARMED FORCES COMMANDER CEDRAS IS WORKING TO PERSUADE ENLISTED TROOPS TO ACCEPT THE OAS-BROKERED AGREEMENT; [REDACTED] GENERAL STAFF OFFICERS HAVE BRIEFED SOLDIERS THROUGHOUT HAITI ON THE AGREEMENT'S BENEFITS, BUT THE TROOPS REMAIN DEEPLY SUSPICIOUS. THE SENATE [REDACTED] INTENDS TO RATIFY THE SETTLEMENT NEXT WEEK BUT WILL TRY TO SUBSTITUTE EITHER CENTRIST MARC BAZIN OR LEFTIST VICTOR BENOIT FOR PRIME MINISTER-DESIGNATE THEODORE. MEANWHILE, THEODORE HAS AGREED THAT, IF HE IS CONFIRMED, HE WILL MEET WITH PRESIDENT ARISTIDE TO DISCUSS THE LATTER'S RETURN.

COMMENT: IF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DELAYS THE VOTE UNTIL NEXT WEEK, AS APPEARS LIKELY, HARDLINERS WILL HAVE AMPLE TIME TO PLAY ON THE TROOPS' ANXIETIES AND TO GALVANIZE OPPOSITION TO THE SETTLEMENT. THEY WILL BE AIDED BY ARISTIDE'S PUBLIC COMMENTS BRANDING CEDRAS A COMMON CRIMINAL AND BY THEODORE'S APPARENT WILLINGNESS TO FACILITATE THE PRESIDENT'S RETURN. RIGHTWING EXTREMISTS MAY ALSO HARASS LEGISLATORS IN AN EFFORT TO PRESS THEM TO REJECT THE SETTLEMENT-- SEVERAL DELEGATES WERE ROUGHED UP ON RETURNING FROM THE OAS TALKS. AN ATTEMPT BY THE SENATE TO DUMP THEODORE WOULD DELAY IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACCORD, PUTTING THE ENTIRE SETTLEMENT AT RISK.

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